



MEMORANDUM

July 30, 2004

SEPA File No. 02-022201

TO: All interested parties

FROM: Jenifer Gitchell, SEPA Center Manager

SUBJECT: **FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (FEIS) FOR THE ALTERNATIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT OF STATE TRUST LANDS IN WESTERN WASHINGTON**

This is to advise you that pursuant to WAC 197-11-360 and WAC 197-11-455, the Department of Natural Resources has issued a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the following:

The purpose of this proposal is the adoption of new policies and procedures resulting in a sustainable harvest level for forested trust lands managed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources in western Washington. The alternatives presented and evaluated in this FEIS include:

Alternative 1 – No Action (Current Operations): Alternative 1 represents the Board of Natural Resources' existing policies and DNR's forest management strategies as indicated by the DNR Forest Resource Plan, 1997 Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), DNR procedures and tasks, current DNR operations, and all current federal and state statutes. This Alternative represents an estimate of continued management of forested trust lands with current management strategies. Under this Alternative, projecting the status quo into the future represents uncertainties, such as how DNR would manage riparian areas or marbled Murrelet habitat in the future. Therefore, in the case of riparian areas and marbled Murrelet habitat, current strategies of deferral are projected indefinitely.

Alternative 2 – Habitat Conservation Plan Intent: Alternative 2 represents existing Board-approved policies and forest management strategies as defined by the DNR Forest Resource Plan, 1997 Habitat Conservation Plan, and current federal and state statutes. It does not include those current DNR procedures and tasks that were not approved by the Board. This alternative would implement the HCP as originally negotiated with the Federal Services in 1997.

Alternative 3 – Combined Ownerships: Alternative 3 represents existing Board-approved policies (except Policy No. 6 on Trust Ownership Groups), forest management strategies defined in the DNR Forest Resource Plan, the 1997 HCP, and current federal and state statutes. "Combined ownerships" refers to a change in Forest Resource Plan Policy No. 6 that defines how to group the trusts' lands when applying the even-flow requirement in Policy No. 4.

Alternative 4 – Passive Management Approach: Alternative 4 represents managing state trust forests in western Washington with passive management approaches to provide increased conservation and habitat protection while producing revenue. This approach maintains the 1997 HCP objectives, the DNR Forest Resource Plan, and current federal and state statutes. "Passive management" refers to a land management approach that allows forest growth and structural development processes to occur with little silvicultural (cultivation of forest species and stand care) activity.

Alternative 5 – Intensive Management Approach: Alternative 5 represents managing state trust forests in western Washington with emphasis on revenue production on lands that are not dedicated to habitat conservation. It maintains 1997 HCP objectives and strategies, DNR Forest Resource Plan (with exception of proposed changes) guidelines, and meets current federal and state statutes. "Intensive or active management" refers to a land management approach that accelerates forest growth and structural development processes through greater use of silvicultural activities.

Preferred Alternative – Innovative Silvicultural Management: The Preferred Alternative represents managing state trust forests in western Washington using "innovative silvicultural management" techniques in habitat areas and current silviculture techniques in lands that are not focused on habitat conservation. This approach attempts to integrate habitat and revenue generation objectives while maintaining the current Habitat Conservation Plan approach, adhering to the Forest Resource Plan policies, and meeting current federal and state statutes. The Preferred Alternative incorporates increased silvicultural activity designed to accelerate forest growth and structural development processes.

The Department will submit the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Sustainable Forest Management of State Trust Lands in Western Washington to the Board of Natural Resources. This action will occur no sooner than seven days from the date of issuance.

A copy of the FEIS has been posted to our agency website. You may download or review this and other SEPA documents related to this file at our web address: <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/sepa>